

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Adrienne Miller

GGA's Eddie Bartley attempts to rescue a robotic duck.

Wildlife Rescue Training at Golden Gate Audubon

Thirty-two friends of wildlife attended a filled-to-capacity, eight-hour workshop at GGA in January on strategies for capturing, handling, and rescuing wildlife. Rebecca Dmytryk Titus and Duane Titus of WildRescue and the International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC), and IBRRC's Mark Russell instructed this class and several others at Bay Area locations this winter. Dmytryk Titus designed the classes after the Cosco Busan oil spill to help prepare for a better response in the next spill or in any situation in which wildlife must be rescued.

Presentations encompassed rescue and rehabilitation practices, laws and regulations covering wildlife and human safety, and animal capture planning and strategies. During an outdoor training exercise, participants put into action some of the capture techniques they had learned in the class by pairing up and stalking and capturing a robotic duck with nets. One aspect of the course that was of particular interest to birders is the importance of understanding natural history. As GGA volunteers learned during the Cosco Busan spill, being familiar with the natural history of a species enabled them to recognize abnormal behaviors and appearance, signs of trouble.

Human safety and communication were big topics: the instructors discussed learning to identify likely or potential environmental hazards, how to consider and

WILDLIFE RESCUE TRAINING continued on page 2

Teacher Inspires Young Naturalists

California public schools may not always receive the highest marks, but then there are shining stars such as John Poole, who teaches science to fourth and fifth grade students in Berkeley elementary schools. For the past 15 years, John's students and their families have enrolled in his Chickadee Club, which opens the minds and lives of students of all ages to the natural world, and especially the world of birds.

John teaches the basics of ornithology in science classes at Malcolm X and John Muir elementary schools, but the students' real education begins when he takes them outdoors "to get science out of the classroom," he says. He leads his students and their families on field trips that range from walks in nearby parks in January and February to an overnight camping trip in Tilden Regional Park in the spring to look for owls, to a much anticipated, two-day trip in November to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge.

"My goal is not to create birders," says John, who admits that he, himself, is "obsessed" by birds. "I want to give the students a wider appreciation of nature and the excitement of seeing what's in their own backyard. I use birds as a way to look at the natural world."

In the classroom, John teaches his students that all identified living things are named using the Linnean binomial. "We also explore the

YOUNG NATURALISTS continued on page 12



INSIDE

- 5 Guilt-Free Birding
- 8 Earth Day
- 8 Falcon Talk

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CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Kevin E. Consey kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org

CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Mike Lynes mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Linda Coffee 510.843.7295
 lcoffee@goldengateaudubon.org

EAST OAKLAND PROGRAM MANAGER

Anthony DeCicco 510.635.5533
 adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org

EAST OAKLAND PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Rubén Guzmán 510.635.5533
 rguzman@goldengateaudubon.org

JOINT EAST COAST COORDINATOR

Jennifer Robinson Maddox 510.919.5873

OFFICE MANAGER

Stephanie Strait 510.843.2222

WILLIAMS BIRD BOX

Lisa Owens Viani lowensvi@sbcglobal.net

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marjorie Blackwell marjb@sbcglobal.net

FIELD TRIP

Pam Belchamber 510.549.2839

OBSEVER

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

WEB EDITOR

webeditor@goldengateaudubon.org

The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Golden Gate Audubon Society
 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
 Berkeley, CA 94702

TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
 www.goldengateaudubon.org
 ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

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Design and layout e.g. communications

WILDLIFE RESCUE TRAINING from cover



Adrienne Miller

IBRRC's Mark Russell discusses the finer points of capture with GGA's Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden.

communicate with volunteers, as well as safety issues such as infections, viruses, and parasites that can potentially be transferred from animals to people.

But a large part of the course was devoted to animal behavior and how to minimize the perception—on the part of wildlife—of threat or attack during rescue efforts. The instructors gave examples of that stress and its dangerous impacts, using anecdotes and imagery. They shared their experiences rescuing wildlife during oil spills throughout the world and during toxic algae blooms.

Other situations discussed included how to help wildlife found entangled in fishing line or hooks or poisoned by rodenticides. New dangers—like entrapment in sod netting—were described: sod is now commercially grown in plastic netting so it can easily be rolled up and installed. The danger is that wildlife—including snakes—can become caught in it the way they can become caught in uncut six-pack rings.

A section of the course was devoted to protocol during oil spills. At the top of the response tree is the Unified Command, the U.S. Coast Guard. In California the Office of Spill Prevention and Response or OSPR, part of the California Department of Fish and Game, reports to Unified Command. The wildlife branch of OSPR is the Oiled Wildlife Care Network or OWCN, which reports to OSPR. Since 1997, OWCN has been administered by the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. Several local wildlife rehab facilities and non-profits participate in the OWCN, including WildCare in San Rafael, the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, PRBO Conservation Science in Petaluma, the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek, and the Peninsula Humane Society in San Mateo.

In addition to taking the Wildlife Emergency Response training, anyone wishing to participate in wildlife rescue during an emergency must work or volunteer for and be trained by one of the participating organizations. Future Wildlife Emergency Response trainings at GGA are planned for the fall and will be announced in *The Gull* and on the GGA website.

—Noreen Weeden

Thanks to Scope City

GGA thanks Scope City, San Francisco, the largest retailer of optics in the world, for their continuing support. They have been helping our Conservation and Education programs since fall 2008. Scope City also provided a speaker, Steve White, to talk at our October, 2008 SF Speaker Series. The talk, "Overview of Modern Optics/Binocular Clinic" was very informative on the primary tools of our passion, binoculars and spotting scopes. Scope City brought various binoculars and spotting scopes from several of the top manufacturers so that the audience could compare them. Members' personal binoculars were checked for proper alignment. Steve will repeat his lecture in Berkeley this summer.

Scope City has also supported Golden Gate Audubon with free binocular checks on our donated binoculars, deep discounts for scopes and tripods for volunteers to use in our programs, and constant great customer service for GGA members. They offer a discount to GGA members. Visit their store at 350 Bay Street in San Francisco, call 415-421-8800, e-mail Sanfrancisco@scopecity.com, or go online to www.scopecity.com.



CONSERVATION CORNER



Verne Nelson

Tree Swallow

SWALLOW CONDOS

Dave Matson, woodshop instructor at Woodside International High School in San Francisco, built six Tree Swallow nest boxes with materials donated by a Golden Gate Audubon supporter. Volunteers installed these nest boxes at the beautiful San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park. Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) normally use tree cavities for nesting, but in an urban environment there are few tree cavities. This species will use nest boxes to lay eggs and raise their young. Tree Swallows primarily consume flying insects. Thank you to Allan Ridley, Eddie Bartley, and Dave Matson for helping with this project. Volunteers are needed to monitor the nest boxes and record any nesting activity through mid-May. We will use Cornell's Nest Watch training and monitoring protocols: volunteers can become certified as nest box monitors.

SAN FRANCISCO PLANS TO TURN OUT LIGHTS FOR BIRDS

The San Francisco Planning Commission asked for a resolution in support of Lights Out for Birds in San Francisco after a GGA presentation on February 12, 2009. GGA volunteers are needed to conduct early-morning censuses in downtown San Francisco during the spring migration (February 15 – May 15) and to collect birds that may have collided with buildings during the night.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

The Port of San Francisco has received a proposal to develop Seawall Lot 337, currently the site of the Giant's baseball parking lot along China Basin Channel and San Francisco Bay. A new 555-bed California Pacific Medical Center is proposed at Cathedral Hill. Lennar is moving forward with the Hunters Point Shipyard project including plans for changes to Yosemite Slough and Candlestick Point State Park. There are plans to add up to 5,700 new homes at Park Merced. If you are interested in learning more about and becoming involved in the wildlife conservation aspects of these projects, please contact Noreen Weeden nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org or attend the next San Francisco Conservation Committee meeting at the Randall Museum on May 6, 2009 at 7 p.m.

—Noreen Weeden

In the East Bay, the proposed Kohl's development along the shoreline (see December and January/February *Gulls*) has been cancelled for now. For more information, contact Phil Price, East Bay Conservation Committee Chair, at pnprice@creekcats.com.

BURROWING OWL UPDATE

Over a dozen volunteers have been trained as docents to show interested visitors the owls at Cesar Chavez park, teach them interesting facts about the owls, and collect some data about the owls' behavior. One of the owls has moved from the west side of the park into the fenced-off area; that owl, and an owl that was already in the fenced area, have taken up residence in adjacent burrows, about as far from the fence (and people and dogs) as it is possible to get. We don't know whether they are trying to get away from the fence



Phil Price

Burrowing Owl

(which, though only 2.5 feet high, does obstruct the vision of these ground-dwelling birds) or trying to get away from the activity. The owl that moved from the west side of the park is visibly less agitated than he was when people were passing close to him all the time.

—Phil Price



Jennifer Robinson Maddox

Alameda Wildlife Refuge volunteers

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Alameda Wildlife Refuge, Alameda

Since September of 2008, the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge has been a part of a national program called TogetherGreen Volunteer Days. The goals of TogetherGreen are to build conservation leadership, engage millions of people in conservation action, and achieve lasting conservation results. Over 100 volunteers from local high schools and UC Berkeley, as well as individuals and GGA members, helped out at the site last year, with help from the Friends of Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR) committee.

Help Out: The last workday was March 8th, but FAWR needs TERNWATCH Volunteers. This work involves watching and recording activity at the Least Tern colony during the breeding season to report predator takes or risks as well as other problems that may cause breeding failure. Volunteers will be directly observing an endangered species, a tremendous privilege. A required two-hour training class will be offered. Schedules will be available before May. If you are interested, please contact Leora Feeney from Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge at leoraalameda@att.net.

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4



A volunteer waters seedlings at Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SHORELINE, OAKLAND

In the summer of 2008, GGA staff decided to expand the work of Eco-Oakland at Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline to involve monthly workdays at the native plant restoration site. GGA was part of the East Bay Regional Park District's MLK Day – Day of Service, and about 40 volunteers planted, weeded, mulched, and watered at our site. We have seen an increase in groups wanting to help out, including BuildOn, St. Mary's College, and high schools from Oakland and Alameda. Located near Arrowhead Marsh, this site

is a great place to bird-gaze while getting your hands dirty.

Help Out: Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline, Oakland. Enter the park from Swan Way and follow the road to the end parking lot. Then look for the wooden observation platform adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh.



Volunteers prepare to plant at Harding Park.

HARDING PARK, SAN FRANCISCO

Our quail restoration site will soon receive lots of attention with the President's Cup visit to Harding Park Golf Course in October. Not only do we have groups of all kinds joining us every month to help make it presentable, but the site will also be roped off with informational signs. Groups who have joined us recently have been Beta Alpha Psi, San Francisco State University, BuildOn, Project 20, University of San Francisco, and Lowell High School.

Help Out: Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m. to noon: Harding Park, San Francisco. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd.

MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Saturday, April 11, 1 to 4 p.m.

Improve habitat for birds and other wildlife on the coastal dunes and bluffs at Lands End in San Francisco. Meet near East Wash at 1 p.m., at the golf course access road west of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. The easiest way to reach this area is to take Clement St. to 34th Ave, turn north on 34th to enter the Lincoln Park Golf Course, and follow this road up the hill to the Palace of the Legion of Honor. At the top of the hill, 34th Ave intersects with El Camino del Mar. At this intersection there is an access road to the Golf Course. We will meet at this intersection and walk down through the Golf Course to get to East Wash. Please wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes; we will provide tools, water, and snacks. This event is led by the Parks Conservancy and co-sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon.

Drivers Wanted

Have you taken the Wildlife Rescue Training class recently and want to help? The Shorebird Nature Center in Berkeley receives injured birds from Eastshore State Park year round and needs help transporting them to the International Bird Rescue Research Center in Cordelia, to WildCare in San Rafael, or to the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek. In spring, the center needs help with baby birds, as well as possums. If you are interested, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox with your name, phone number, and days/hours you are available; she will pass the information on to the Shorebird Nature Center.

Join a Conservation Committee

Join the Conservation Committee on your side of the Bay to find out about our local projects. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at a restaurant in downtown Berkeley. For more information contact Phil Price at pnprice@creekcats.com. The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum.

For more information on any of these activities or events, or for directions to any of the sites, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, GGA's Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox

A Guilt-Free Big Year



Andrew Kleinhesselink

Heading toward Mono City: Josiah Clark, GGA member, above, and Andrew Kleinhesselink did their Big Year without burning fossil fuels.

Last year, my friend Josiah Clark and I traveled 4,000 miles and saw 295 species of birds. We birded from the parks of San Francisco to the peaks of the Sierra Nevada. And we did it without cars, buses, or planes—we birded by bike. We were among hundreds of birders around the world in 2008 who did a Big Green Big Year—i.e., a zero carbon emissions, self propelled Big Year.

Birding is a powerful incentive to travel. A birder might travel hundreds of miles in the course of a year, maybe thousands, for the sake of a big year. I wanted the epic challenge of a big year, something every birder schemes of doing, but amid the record gas prices, and the increasingly immediate effects of global warming, I couldn't stomach the expense nor the guilt of spending that much time in a car, and adding that much CO₂ to the atmosphere.

So we strapped tripods to the frames of our bikes and hauled scopes in our backpacks. We learned to deal with binoculars swinging from our necks while we cranked up hills. We ate and drank as we rolled.

Our first goal for 2008 was trying to

break our big day record set in 2007. We knew we could see over 120 species of birds just around Bolinas, but breaking our biking record would require seeing 151 species. Our best big day was a 20-hour ride through west Marin, ending with a 12-mile ride uphill along the muddy and rutted Bolinas Ridge in the dark.

After owling before dawn, fixing a broken chain on Mt. Tam, scoping Bolinas Lagoon, riding around Nicasio Reservoir, pedaling the length of Lucas Valley Road, scanning the ducks at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds at sunset, riding around China Camp and all the way back to San Francisco in the dark, we added up our list: 149 species. All that and no record, but one advantage of birding on bike is that it is always an adventure.

As the birding doldrums of summer began, we set our sights on the distant crown of the Sierra and the great jewel at its center: Mono Lake. We decided that going east was the only way to add more birds to our year List. So with few of the details worked out, we started pedaling. We marked our passage by the year birds:

Phainopeplas on Mines Road, Swainson's Hawks in the Central Valley, the first Mountain Chickadee beyond the town of Sonora. We worked our way up Hwy 120 towards 9,624-foot Sonora Pass. Cranking up the steepest highway we'd ever seen in our lives, we questioned whether we could make it. At the summit, Mountain Bluebirds were a reminder of just how high we were. Mono Lake felt surreal. From there we headed back over Tioga Pass and through Yosemite, its views shrouded in wildfire smoke. When our trip was over, we had biked over 700 miles and added some 30 species to our list.

Thankfully, as fall migration began, the new birds started to come to us. We added great birds, like Black-throated Sparrow and Black-throated Green Warbler, right in our own neighborhood. Josiah even found a Magnolia Warbler in his backyard. By the end of the year, we were exhausted. As December drew to a close, we found we had succeeded in seeing more species than anyone in the world participating in the Big Green Big Year. Josiah and I tied for first

GUILT-FREE BIG YEAR continued on page 10



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, April 3, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,

philajane6@yahoo.com

On the first Friday of the month the Jewell Lake walk will meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-mile, two-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Breeding birds are returning, and we may be treated to some wonderful bird song. Mud and rain should be gone by now, but heavy April showers cancels.

Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden at

Strybing Arboretum

Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160, www.sfnature.org

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/bookstore at front gate of Botanical Garden, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Co-sponsored by Botanical Garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sunday, April 5, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Botanical Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of Golden Gate Park has several microhabitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is oriented toward beginning birders.

Presidio

San Francisco

Sundays, April 5, and 19,

9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Andrew Kleinhesselink, 415.517.1725

This trip is offered twice in April. Meet at Crissy Field Center. We will check shorebirds and gulls, then follow one of the last free-flowing creeks in San Francisco through several new restoration sites in the Tennessee Hollow watershed in the Presidio, ending at the source of the water itself, El Polin Springs. We'll walk back down the eastern side of Tennessee Hollow and end back at Crissy Field around noon. Expect to walk around 2.5 to 3 miles. We'll focus on riparian habitat in the Presidio and hopefully see some early migrants such as Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Allen's Hummingbirds.

Directions to Crissy Field Center: www.parksconservancy.org/our_work/crissy/visit.asp. The MUNI 29 Bus comes to the Presidio Transit center: www.presidio.gov/directions/transit/

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, April 17, 8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Dominik Mosur; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org, 415.554.9600 x16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt for this popular birding experience. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants. We will monitor hilltop scrub and south cliff as well.

Mines Road

Livermore

Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m. – early evening

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,

davequady@att.net

This trip will begin in Livermore at 8 a.m.

and end there in the early evening, with opportunities to end earlier if you wish. We can expect to see Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla, and Bullock's Oriole in this habitat; Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, and Golden Eagle are among other possibilities. Bring food and liquids.

The trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader, beginning at noon on March 23. Carpooling is encouraged to/from Livermore, and essential during the day because of limited parking along our route. The leader will provide directions and carpooling information to those who are confirmed on the trip.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland

Sunday, April 19, 9 a.m. – noon

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.316.8932, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Spend a Sunday morning at Arrowhead Marsh at the MLK Shoreline where we will look for passerines and lingering overwintering waterfowl and shorebirds, some coming into breeding plumage. Tides will be favorable for spotting the resident Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, and Sora. Bring a scope if you have one. Beginners welcome.

Take Hwy 880 towards the Oakland Airport. Exit at Hegenberger Road, going south. Turn right on Edgewater Drive and continue to end of road. Turn left at the Garretson Point parking lot. We will start at Damon Marsh and end at Arrowhead Marsh.

Aquatic Park Bird Secrets

San Francisco

Sunday, April 19, 9:30 a.m.

Carol Kiser, SF Maritime National Historic Park Ranger, 415.561.7100 or 415.561.7104

On this beginners' walk at Aquatic Park we will discover bird secrets that can be overlooked. We will discover their behavior, habitat, and food sources. We will see water and land birds, which will reveal a great deal about our world and theirs. Meet at foot of Hyde Street Pier (Hyde and Jefferson) for this two-hour, one-mile walk.

Bicycle Trips

Kathy Jarrett, leader

510.547.1233 (call for cell number; no calls after 9 p.m.),

Kathy_Jarrett@yahoo.com

Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress in layers. Rain cancels.

BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org

American River Trail

Sacramento to Folsom

Friday, April 3

Folsom to Sacramento

Saturday, April 4

Advance reservations necessary. Maximum of 12 participants.

For this one or two day bike birding trip, see the March Gull and contact trip leader to check available space. All levels of birders welcome. Recent riding experience is a must to ensure the stamina necessary for such a long ride. Details will be sent to participants.

Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail

Oakley, Elvert Road, 94568-1000

Saturday, April 11, 9 a.m.

Meet at Fetzer Lane and Jordan Lane in Oakley. Each year, nearly half of the waterfowl and shorebirds migrating along the Pacific Flyway pass through the Delta. A paved trail has views of freshwater marsh and is an excellent place to see many species of birds.

All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Trail maps online at the EBRPD website. If you have room in your vehicle for an extra bicycle or if you need a ride, please contact us at the earliest opportunity.

Driving: CA-24 E toward Walnut Creek, I-680 N, CA-242 N. Take Calif Hwy 4 east toward Stockton/Pittsburg and do not take the Brentwood By-Pass, but take the Hwy 4 exit toward Brentwood/Stockton. Turn right (east) onto Highway 4/Main St, go 1.1 mi, turn left at Big Break Rd, go 0.2 mi. and turn right at Vintage Pkwy, go 0.8 mi then left at Walnut Meadows Dr, go 0.6 mi to end, then right at Fetzer Ln. Park on street near entrance to trail at Fetzer Ln & Jordan Ln, Oakley.

Public Transit: The leaders will not take public transit on this trip. From the Pittsburg/Baypoint BART Station to the trailhead is over 15 miles, some on trail. From the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART Station, cross Bailey Road to access the Delta De Anza Regional Trail. Exit the trail at A Street and go north to turn right on Wilbur Street in Oakley and just after crossing under Highway 160, turn right onto Bridgehead then left onto Main Street/Highway 4 and follow above directions.

Some hills and stairs. Dress in layers, bring binoculars and bird books.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, April 22, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,

hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,

510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Join us at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. Most of the winter migrants should still be with us, some with full breeding plumage, and the cormorant rookery will still be in full swing, but the Double crested Cormorants will be without their bunny-ear crests! And with luck, the egret rookery may be back in business. The Park may offer warblers, woodpeckers, and a few surprises.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Sunday, May 3, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Malcolm Sproul, 925.376.8945

Meet by Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. in El Cerrito, next to tennis courts between Brewster Drive and Thors Day Road. We'll drive to trailhead on Rifle Range Road, then walk a hilly transect of the canyon to bird brush lands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides, and grasslands. Five-mile hike led by Malcolm for the 29th year. Bring lunch and liquids.

2009 Annual Spring Bird Survey

Presidio of San Francisco

Saturday, May 9, 8 a.m. – noon

Andrew Kleinhesselink, 415-850-4332,

akleinhesselink@presidiotrust.gov

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day collecting data on the Presidio's breeding bird species. Since 2005, one morning each spring volunteer birdwatchers have walked one of eight designated routes through the Presidio counting species of concern such as Wrentits, Wilson's Warblers, and Olive-sided Flycatchers. These estimates will help document

trends in bird populations in the Presidio, and the effect that restoration and re-forestation are having on breeding habitat in the park. The data is only strengthened by continued monitoring—but we need your help. Novice birders will be paired with experienced birders, so this is a great way to learn to identify common San Francisco birds both by sight and by their spring songs. After walking their routes, teams will re-convene at Crissy Field Center to share their birding highlights.

Yosemite's Bird Life

Yosemite National Park

Friday-Sunday, May 29 – 31

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,

davequady@att.net, and Dave Cornman

The trip will cover the lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park. The trip is limited to 20 participants, but there may still be space available. Contact the leader. Carpooling encouraged. Confirmed participants should bring warm clothes, rainwear, and rubber boots for wet meadows. Bring lunches for Saturday and Sunday and be prepared to walk about three miles each day.



SPEAKER SERIES

KAREN FREDERIKSEN, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m.

Courtesy of and © Glen Neville



"Gracie" (shown here) and George, her mate, nested for several years in downtown San Francisco and on the central span of the Bay Bridge. After George disappeared in 2007, Gracie was displaced from the bridge by another pair of Peregrines.

The Falcons of San Francisco and San Jose City Hall

Glenn Stewart

Berkeley: Thursday, April 16

Join conservation biologist Glenn Stewart for a discussion of the iconic falcons that now live in our urban environment. While the Peregrine Falcon population has recovered, its numbers remain an important indicator of environmental health. The UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group continues to monitor the population and recently has begun to enroll volunteers to assist with nest monitoring and "fledge watch" at urban locations. There are currently about 20 Peregrine Falcon nest territories within view of the San Francisco Bay—a dramatic change from 1970 when just two productive pairs of Peregrines were found in the entire state. This remarkable recovery is something for Audubon members—many of whom contributed to the recovery in some way—to celebrate.

Glenn Stewart joined the Predatory Bird Research Group when it was formed at UC Santa Cruz during the mid-1970s. Since then, he has led projects to restore Harris's Hawks to the Sonoran Desert near the Colorado River, and Bald Eagles to Central California from a release site in Big Sur. He co-authored a statewide study of Northern Goshawks and conducted post-oil spill research on Bald Eagles at Prince William Sound, Alaska during the summer after the Exxon Valdez went aground. During the early 1990s he addressed conflicts between extractive industry and wildlife values in Idaho as director of the Idaho Conservation League. Today, he teaches at UC Santa Cruz and mentors students and members of the public in avian monitoring programs. With underwriting from corporations and foundations, he gives school assembly programs on the work of conservation biologists to recover the Peregrine Falcon population.

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

Earth Day at S.F.'s Pier 94

Golden Gate Audubon will celebrate Earth Day on April 19th at Pier 94: our efforts there began on Earth Day 2002. Since then, more than 150 volunteers have hauled away over a half-ton of scrap metal, several truckloads of star thistle, and hundreds of old tires. With the help of our members and volunteers, we are gradually changing the landscape and creating valuable habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife. Native salt marsh has already formed along this small part of the San Francisco Bay shoreline and is beginning to attract sandpipers, herons, terns, Snowy Egrets, Willets, Killdeer, Black Oystercatchers, and American Avocets. Located in the shadow of container ships and heavy equipment, the restored salt marsh and adjacent upland are home to many native and non-native plants. In order to ensure that all of our native plants thrive, we need help from volunteers removing invasive weeds and clearing out trash accumulated from the winter storms.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Sunday, April 19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a lunch break and bird walk. Refreshments provided. For more information or for directions, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, GGA Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.



John Flores



Lee Karney

House Finch

Golden Gate Audubon is sponsoring the following 2 classes through the Albany Adult School, 601 San Gabriel Avenue, Albany. Register online at <http://albany.k12.ca.us/adult/> or call 510.559.6580 for more information.

Beginning Birding

Anne Hoff,
anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Five Tuesday evenings, May 5 – June 2, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Five Saturday field trips, May 9 – June 6

This introduction to birding covers identification, habitats, and use of equipment. Learn to recognize the more common birds of the Bay Area and where to find them.

The Romance of Birds

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com (www.naturetrip.com)

Golden Gate Audubon offices

Four Thursday evenings, July 9 – 30, 7 – 9:00 p.m.
Four Sunday field trips, July 12 – August 2

This new class on bird behavior and physiology will focus on local nesting birds that are here in summer. Presentations include colorful imagery and discussions of bonding, nesting, and parenting behaviors of waterfowl, waders, raptors, shorebirds, hummers, and songbirds. We'll also greet shorebirds returning from their northerly breeding grounds and have fun comparing birds in fresh juvenile plumages to adults in worn breeding plumages. One field trip (Frank's Dump to view shorebirds) includes a hike of one mile each way on a wide flat path to get to the observation area.

This class will be held at GGA's office in Berkeley. \$80 fee. Limited to 20 students. To register, call GGA at 510.843.2222 or email ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

Butterflies in the City and the Sticks

Ed Zeman, ed@naturetrip.com (www.naturetrip.com)

Four Tuesday evenings, May 5 – 26, 7 – 8 p.m.
Four Saturday field trips, May 9 – 30

Exclusive video reveals butterfly life cycle details. Learn identification, butterfly gardening, caterpillar rearing, and more. On field trips, look for field marks, behavior, and favored plants.

Spring San Francisco Class

The following class is jointly sponsored by the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society and Golden Gate Audubon.

Wild Birds of San Francisco: Spring Migrations

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com (www.naturetrip.com)
San Francisco Botanical Garden's County Fair Building

Wednesday May 13, and Monday May 18, 7 – 9 p.m.
Three Saturday field trips, May 9, 16 and 23

In this new San Francisco class we will be focusing on birds that are here in spring, exploring habitats and habits. Presentations include information specific to both area migrants and resident birds using colorful imagery and discussions of bonding, nesting and parenting behaviors. We'll have opportunities to view waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds and songbirds in breeding plumages as they pass through in migration or set up for the local nesting season.

The first meeting will be at the main entrance to the Botanical Garden at 10 a.m. on May 9. \$60 fee. To register, call GGA at 510.843.2222 or email ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Limited to 25 students.



Vern Bothwell

Northern Harrier

place. But it wasn't just competitiveness that spurred us onward. More so than by car, birding by bike is an intimate way of observing and appreciating the land. The connections between different landscapes and habitats are lost in a car speeding from ocean to desert to mountain without stopping. Biking lets you see and hear the in-between.

And being on a bike opens your eyes to the full impacts of technology. On the road, you smell the exhaust and tar, feel the dusty kick of a passing semi. At times, the road seems to abhor life.



Clark and Kleinhesselink at Tioga Pass

In the course of the year we found hundreds of dead animals on the shoulder, just far enough over that you would never see them in a car. On our nine day trip to Mono Lake, we found Wood Ducks, Barn Owls, Cliff Swallows, and dozens of other species perished by the wayside. Driving has more immediate impacts than contributing to global warming.

But the Big Green Big Year was beautiful too. I learned that there is still adventure to be had right in the middle of our populated state. And that there is joy in birding in the slow lane.

—Andy Kleinhesselink

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

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Anonymous, Mary Bachman and William Downing, Andrea Burhoe, Arlene H. and James N. Sullivan, Jeffrey A. Goodby and Jan L. Deming, Jacqueline Smalley and John H. Austin, MD, Bob Bennett, Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna Ridley.

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Yvonne L. Bull: in memory of Hazel Houston

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Ms. Theodosia H. Ferguson: multiple Audubon prints
Miles and Mel McKey: multiple pairs of binoculars to use in field trips and classes
Hank Strobeck: materials for building nest boxes

GRANTS

California Audubon: for Quail Habitat Restoration
The Clorox Company Foundation: for the Eco-Oakland Program



February's returning rains were wet enough to keep many birders hunkered down, but were not yet near the deluge needed to end the state's three-year drought. Despite the generally low level of activity, a few choice sightings made birding news.

LOONS TO DUCKS

In MRN, the Tomales Bay Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) remained at Miller Park Boat Launch through the 17th (mob). Another Yellow-billed was located on the 1st, swimming in the Russian River mouth near Jenner, SON (SD, fide EP; DF, DQ). A Feb. 12 seawatch from Moss Beach, SM, tallied 9 Northern Fulmars wheeling over the waves (RT). On the 25th, a Leach's Storm-Petrel made a surprising foray into the Bay and past Johnson's Landing at Hayward RS, ALA (BR). A late January report from the PRBO team working on Año Nuevo Island, SM, included a photograph of a Brown Booby roosting with pelicans on the 29th (fide PJM).

Starting on the 14th, a Cattle Egret searched unsuccessfully for bovine company on the lawns of Foster's Landing Apartments in Foster City, SM (PM, JR; mob). Back on Tomales Bay, 3 Harlequin Ducks were spotted on the 16th from Hwy 1 at MM 40.61 (JL; mob). Long-tailed Ducks were reported on the 9th from Hayward's Landing at Hayward RS (BR) and Feb. 13-17 at Redwood Shores, SM (DP; JR, DWe).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDES

On Feb. 10, another Hairy Woodpecker (*Larus schistisagus*) was picked out of the gull flock at Venice SB in Half Moon Bay, SM, this one an adult bird (RT). This month's Glaucous Gull count totaled 17 individuals scattered throughout the region. Solo Black-legged Kittiwakes were discovered on the 17th at Drake's Beach in PRNS, MRN (JW) and on the 28th at the Salmon Cr. mouth, north of Bodega Bay, SON (LH). On the 27th, a Pigeon Pt., SM, seawatch logged 63 Black-legged Kittiwakes headed north (RT).



Snowy Owl

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A caller to the hotline on the 21st reported a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) at Grizzly Island, SOL (GS). Unlike the 2007 Snowy Owl that overwintered in the same vicinity, this arctic visitor continued its wandering. Just to the west on San Pablo Bay, an Eastern Phoebe was discovered Feb. 9, hawking insects from a rooftop on Mare Island, SOL (DWi). Continuing west, a Northern Shrike turned up on the 14th at Huichica Cr. unit of the NAP-SON Marsh, NAP, where it lured birders out into the rain through the 18th (MB; mob).

A Brown Thrasher made a lucky Friday the 13th appearance near the Quarry Staging Area at Coyote Hills RP, ALA (LBe; mob, fide SML). On the 23rd, an observer in Santa Rosa, SON, noted unusual call notes from the neighborhood Cedar Waxing flock, which proved to be from 2 Bohemian Waxwings (DS).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

SE's *Wintering Warbler* (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) continued its dead leaf-gleaning ways through the 25th in Ferry Park, where it has overwintered since Dec. 11 (mob). Other notable warblers included a continuing Palm Warbler near Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, SCL, BB; Black-and-white Warblers at Fort Mason Community Garden, SF (LS) and along Pilarcitos Cr. at Venice SB in Half Moon Bay, SM (MD, RT, LBe), and a continuing Northern Waterthrush along Denniston Cr., Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM (mob).

A probable Summer Tanager turned up near the Berkeley Rose Garden, ALA, on the 13th, just before returning rains dampened birding activity (WMC). Clay-colored Sparrows lingered at Guadalupe Cr. north of Blossom Hill, SCL (mob) and near Nob Hill pond in Redwood Shores, SM (RT; RF). The Livermore, ALA, Harris's Sparrow remained a backyard fixture through the 22nd (DR; mob).

A 1st-year male Rose-breasted Grosbeak rewarded a visit to the GGP Arboretum, SF, on Feb. 16 (JM, DM). Three SF Orioles were tentatively ID'd as Orchard Orioles in Glen Park (RG), Fort Mason Community Garden (AE; MWE), and Potrero Hill Playground (KL). A 4th SF Oriole at Fort Mason Community Garden was probably a Hooded Oriole (EB). A 1st-winter male Bullock's Oriole was located on the 10th, foraging in the blossoms of a large white-flowering eucalyptus near the Stanford Dish, SCL (BB).

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers. "oot" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional lists; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Pod Thornton for helping compile Observations data.

Abbreviations for Observers: AE, A. Eshner; BB, B. Bousman; BP, Bob Pickmond; DF, Dea Fried; DM, Dan Murphy; DP, Don Pendleton; DQ, Dave Quady; DP, Dennis Rashe; DS, Doug Shaw; DWe, Dave Weber; DWi, Dan Williams; EB, Eddie Bartley; EP, Eric Preston; ES, Edward Sickles; GS, Gary Shekey; JL, Jim Lomax; JM, Joan Murphy; JP, Jennifer Pycenga; JT, Jane Tatchell; JW, Jim White; KL, Kevin Liberg; LBe, Leonie Batkin; LBe, Lauryn Benedict; LH, Lisa Hug; MB, Murray Berner; MC, Mimi Calher; MD, Matthew Dodder; MWE, Mark W. Eaton; PE, Phil Eager; PH, Peter Headland; PJM, Peter J. Metropoulos; PM, Peggy Macres; PF, Rich Ferrick; PG, Roberta Guise; RT, Ron Thorn; SD, Stephen Davies; SML, Stephen M. Long; WMC, William McCoy.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr, Creek; Cyn, Canyon; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MM, Mile Marker; MPN, Marin; Mt, Mount; N, North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PPBO, P. P. Payes Blvd Observatory; PRNS, P. P. Payes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Pd, Road; Pes, Reservoir; PP, Regional Park; PS, Regional Shoreline; S, South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SP, State Preserve.

YOUNG NATURALISTS from cover

construction of feathers—vane, barbule, rachis, calamus, etc. As we look at birds, I try to teach about adaptations to habitat, why they migrate, why females are mostly less brightly colored, undulating flight as a protective measure, hollow bones as a flight adaptation, etc. Birds and the differences between them are a good entry point to a discussion of evolution,” says John. He adds, “I meet all the California science standards, but we can do more. The Chickadee Club provides a social value by teaching students to preserve natural habitat.” So in addition to the field trips, every year Chickadee Club members work on local beach cleanups in September and participate in Oakland’s Christmas Bird Count in December. (For the past 12 years, the students have helped on the count in Tilden Park.)

John’s reputation extends beyond his current students. Ask his friend, Anne McTavish, who helps out on the CBC and goes on some of the field trips. “John is one of the most popular and beloved science teachers,” she says. Ask John’s birding buddy, Larry Jacobs, who says, “Kids and parents fall all over him. We were walking



John Poole

The Chickadee Club camps out in Tilden Park to look for owls.

on a Berkeley street one day when a teenager—one of his former students—walked by and called out, ‘How ya’ doin’ Mr. Poole?’”

Or ask Molly Fullerton, a junior at Berkeley High School, who is intent on a career in science, thanks to John, who was her teacher at Jefferson Elementary School. “He’s the reason I’m interested in science,” she says. “He’s one of the best

teachers I’ve ever had.”

Unfortunately for upcoming elementary school students, John plans to retire in a year. But, with any luck, Golden Gate Audubon will recruit him as a volunteer in our Eco-Oakland and Eco-Richmond environmental education programs, where he can continue his love affair with birds, and inspiring young naturalists.

—Marjorie Blackwell

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